

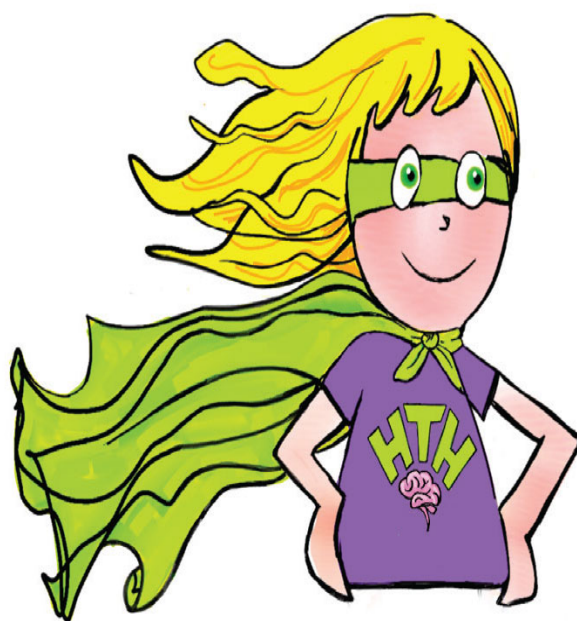
THE ADVENTURES OF Head Trauma Hero



PATTI FOSTER
WITH MOLLY DETWEILER

ILLUSTRATED BY
JOY MARSHALL

TO: _____



FROM: _____

THE ADVENTURES OF

Head Trauma Hero



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REDEMPTION
PRESS 



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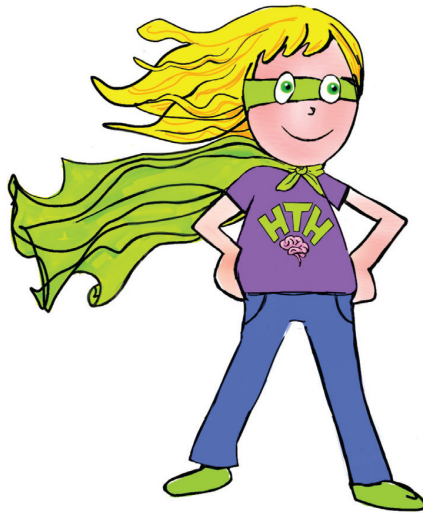
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For all the courageous
Head Trauma Heroes
around the world—
I'm cheering you on as you
brave the brain injury battle
with heroic hope!





This is Patricia—Patti for short. Patti was just your average, active, all-American kid, doing average, active, all-American stuff. Y'know—school, friends, sports, music, movies. Normal. Regular. Average.

But all that changed one summer day as Patti sat in the back seat of an SUV with a close friend. Her favorite song was on the radio. The windows were down. She was singing along quietly, soaking in the sunshine, looking forward to a fun day out and about with her friend's family.

All of a sudden, Patti heard and felt the biggest, loudest, most unbelievable crash you could ever imagine. It was like the world exploded. And then, nothing. Darkness.

That, friends, was the day Patti's life changed forever. That was the day she stopped being an average, all-American girl named Patricia. That was the day she became a head trauma hero.





CHAPTER 1

PRAYER POWER

Leigh Anne was a girl with a lot of interests. She liked to draw funny cartoons featuring goofy talking animals. She loved baking (and the treat tasting that followed). But if she had to pick one thing that she really *loved*, it would be hopping on her glimmering blue cruiser bike. Metallic silver and blue tassels fluttered in the wind from the ends of her handlebars as she zoomed down the street. For Leigh Anne, it was like flying!

The joy of sailing down the street could only be topped by sharing the fun with a friend. And so nearly every warm Saturday morning, Leigh Anne would ride down Treat Street to her best friend Patti's house. Patti had been Leigh Anne's BFF for as long as they could remember. They'd been riding together since they had first figured out how to pedal their trikes. Patti was always ready for adventure when Leigh Anne showed up on her doorstep.

This Saturday, though, was different. When Leigh Anne knocked on the door, no cloud of wavy blond hair popped up in the window. No sparkling green eyes greeted her this morning. Leigh Anne didn't recognize the woman who answered the door.

The woman's pale face was tense with worry. "Patti won't be able to ride bikes with you today," the lady said with a tremble in her voice.

"Is she sick?" Leigh Anne asked, looking past the woman to see if her friend was resting on the couch beyond. "Can I cheer her up?"

"No, honey. No. She's not sick. But she's not here." The woman took a deep breath and wiped a stray tear from her cheek. "Patti ... well, Patti was in a

very serious car wreck last night. She was hurt very badly, and she's in the hospital. I'll call your mom and explain everything, okay, dear?" With that she gently closed the door.

Leigh Anne felt sick in the pit of her stomach. She rode home slowly, a lump in her throat.

By the time she arrived home, her mother was just setting down her phone. There were tears in Mom's eyes. "Sit down, sweetie. Patti's aunt just called."

Leigh Anne sank slowly down onto the couch beside her mother.

With her arms around her daughter, Leigh Anne's mom gently explained. "A big truck that was pulling a trailer with a lot of cars on it was going too fast. As it came closer to the traffic light, it didn't slow down, and it hit Patti's car very hard." Her mom paused. "She was thrown out of the car. She hurt her head very, very badly. Her brain was hurt so badly that she is in what is called a coma.* It's like a very, very deep sleep that she can't wake up from right now."

Leigh Anne jumped up and faced her mother. "What can I do to help her, Mom? I need to help my friend. Let's go to her. I need to see her!"

"We can't talk with her right now," her mother answered quietly, "because the doctors and nurses are working very hard to help her heal."

"But, Mom, she's my best friend. She needs me." Leigh Anne began to cry.

"I know, lovey. But we can't yet." Her mother drew Leigh Anne back into her arms and wiped away tears from her face. "But you know what we can do? Something that really will make a difference right here and now? We can pray. God is with her. And He's with us. And He loves it when His children pray for each other."

Leigh Anne nodded and closed her eyes as her mother began to pray. She was still so scared and so worried for her sweet, wonderful, adventurous Patti. But she knew God cared. And so she would pray. She would pray harder than she had ever prayed before. And God would be with them.



- Good friends are a gift from God.
- Sometimes really difficult things happen to people we love.
- When your friends are hurt, your heart hurts for them—and that is a very special way of showing how much you care.
- Praying can make a difference and is one of the most important things you can do when your friends are hurting.

1. What did you learn with Leigh Anne?
2. Have you ever been worried about a hurting friend?
3. How did you help him or her?
4. What are some things you might do in the future to help a head trauma hero in his or her difficult time?





CHAPTER 2

THE FANTASTIC FRIENDS

“Just because she has a hard time talking doesn’t mean she can’t hear you,” the nurse said.

Two weeks had passed since Patti had been transformed into a head trauma hero. She was still in the hospital and was slowly waking up to the world again after being in a coma. Today was the first time that Leigh Anne and a few of their other friends were allowed to visit.

“She knows what you’re saying,” the nurse encouraged them. “Talking to Patti will help her heal. Don’t be afraid.”

The girls were so excited to see their friend. It felt like forever since they had been together. But they were also very nervous and unsure. They gathered awkwardly around Patti’s bed, two on each side.

Slowly Head Trauma Hero began to turn her eyes toward them. At first she simply stared, as if she wasn’t sure who they were. Her friends could see the confusion in her eyes, and they didn’t know what to do or say.

“Does she know who we are?” one of the girls asked.

“I’m not sure,” said the nurse. “Just be gentle and talk to her like you would normally. Give her time.”

They all smiled shyly at Head Trauma Hero, and then, carefully, the girls each reached out and touched their friend’s arms. To their delight, Patti slowly moved her left arm toward them. They giggled with excitement.

“It’s us, Patti,” Leigh Anne told her softly. “Sunny’s here. Piano Girl is too. And Smiley! The gang’s all here!”

As they smiled down on her, Head Trauma Hero tried to move her mouth. At first her friends weren't sure what was happening. They looked at each other with worried faces and cast anxious glances at the nurse.

Then Piano Girl's face lit up as she solved the mystery. "She's trying to say our names!"

They all cheered. "She *does* know us!"

The girls were so excited and tried their best to talk one at a time, which was a challenge. They found it hard to contain their joy.

All too soon the nurse interrupted. "Sorry, girls, but it's time to let your friend rest. All this excitement has used a lot of her much-needed brain fuel."

"May we sing one of her favorite songs with her before we go?" the friends pleaded. "We'll sing it really slow and quiet."

"Okay." The nurse smiled. "And then she'll need to rest."

In soft, sweet voices, the girls sang, "You are my sunshine, my only sunshine ..."

To everyone's astonishment, Patti moved her lips, trying to mouth the words along with her friends. "You ... are ... my ... sun ... shine, ... my ... only ... sun ... shine ..."

Though Patti had a long way to go, the music was still alive inside her ... and her adventures were just beginning.



- Friends need each other.
- Friends can help each other.
- Friends can learn from each other.
- Grown-ups, like nurses, doctors, parents, and teachers, are always there to help you when you don't know what to do.
- Be gentle and patient with your head trauma hero.
- If you have experienced a head trauma, remember that you're still *you* and your friends still love you a lot!

1. Have you ever visited a friend or loved one in the hospital? How did you feel? What did you do?
2. If you were in the hospital, what was it like when people came to visit you? What helped you the most?
3. What advice would you give other kids who might be unsure about what to do when visiting someone who has experienced a head trauma?
4. What's your favorite song? Why?





CHAPTER 3

THE NIGHTMARE OF NOISE

After over one hundred days in the hospital, Patti, our head trauma hero, was finally in “rehab”—a special kind of hospital where she could relearn, rebuild, and be restored in her mind, body, and soul. She was now on a mission to prepare her brain and body for new adventures.

Today, love and celebration filled every inch of space in Patti’s hospital room. Smiling friends and family surrounded her. So many people had been praying so hard for Patti, and many of them had come to show their support.

More and more people filed into the room, greeting each other with smiles and hugs and laughter. As everyone started to talk at the same time, Patti’s face turned pale. One of her hands twitched. Her left leg shifted back and forth under the sheet.

Patti’s mother immediately noticed the frightened look in her daughter’s eyes. “Are you okay?” Mom asked her gently, stroking her arm. “Everyone is so happy to see you. They all think you’re a hero, Patti.”

With frightened eyes, Patti shook her head and pulled the sheet up to hide her face. She didn’t feel like a hero.

The increasing noise in the room was making our Hero *really* nervous. Her mother immediately waved her hands in the air, signaling for everyone to speak more softly and one at a time. Immediately the well-wishers quieted.

“Patti is so glad you’re all here, but since her brain is still healing, too much noise can be overwhelming and scary.”

Everyone smiled and nodded. They understood and really wanted to make their head trauma hero feel loved, not scared. Peace and quiet covered the room like a warm, cozy blanket.

“Thanks, everybody,” Mom said softly. She had a superpower of her own. She could always sense when her daughter felt troubled and scared, and she was very good at knowing what to do to help.

After a few minutes, Patti’s heart rate slowed, her blood pressure came down, and her body stopped twitching.

Everyone was so happy to see their hero settling down and enjoying the visit. In soft voices, they took turns chatting with her. Patti smiled. It was a good day.





- Loud noises and lots of movement can make head trauma heroes uncomfortable, upset, and frightened.
- Speaking in soft voices and sitting still can help them feel more relaxed.
- Head trauma heroes should always feel free to let a trusted adult know when they are feeling overwhelmed and need quiet.

1. How do you feel when you're in a room with lots of noise and people are talking all at once?
2. What are some ways you can let people know what you need to be more comfortable when they are visiting?
3. What are some quiet activities you could do with a head trauma hero when you visit him or her?





CHAPTER 4

BATTLE OF THE BIRTHDAY BLUES

“Happy birthday to you ...”

Patti tried her best to smile as her four best friends sang. She was glad to see them and so glad they’d come to celebrate with her, but she was finding it hard to be happy. Months had passed since the wreck and her transformation from Patti into Head Trauma Hero. She had come a long way and had healed enough to move to the rehab hospital. Those were big steps forward.

But today was her birthday, and instead of playing party games and dancing around with her pals, she was lying in a hospital bed, still trying to make her mouth say the words in her head.

The girls finished their song with giggles and applause. With all the power she could muster, Head Trauma Hero tried to give her friends a thumbs-up. In a slow whisper she managed, “Th ... an ... ks.” But then the tears ran down her cheeks, and her friends’ faces fell.

“What’s wrong?” Leigh Anne asked gently.

With effort, Patti managed the words “hos ... pi ... tal” and “birth ... day.”

Looking at her sad eyes, her friends immediately understood. “We’re sorry, Patti. I know it stinks to be in the hospital on your birthday.” Everyone stayed quiet for a while. Then one by one, Leigh Anne, Sunny, Piano Girl, and Smiley gathered around Head Trauma Hero. They each placed a gentle hand on her, tears welling up in their eyes too. They weren’t sure what to say, but at least they could comfort their friend.

As Head Trauma Hero looked at her friends, a smile like sunshine broke through her tears. She had the best friends in the world. With this team by her side, this hero could do anything ... even have a fun birthday party in a hospital room.

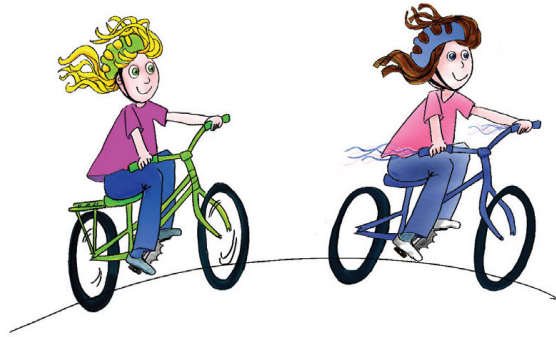
Head Trauma Hero's smile shone, and soon all five girls were laughing as they wiped away their tears. All of a sudden, Leigh Anne jumped up and grabbed a big pink gift bag.

"We can't have a party without treats!" With a sparkle in her eyes and a huge grin on her face, Leigh Anne pulled out two giant bags of candy, scattering tissue paper in the air.

"I ... love ... you ... guys." Head Trauma Hero beamed. With arms open wide, the girls gathered into a giggling group hug.

Patti thought it was her best birthday ever.





- Having friends close can really help when you're having a hard time.
- Small acts of love and kindness make a big difference.
- Sometimes you don't need words to comfort someone. Sharing their tears in quiet can mean a lot.
- Touch is important. Gentle hugs can ease hurting hearts.

1. Do you ever feel like you don't know what to say when your friend is hurting?
2. What things can you do to show your love and support without words?
3. What are some creative ways you can use your eyes, your touch, or your tone of voice to communicate with your head trauma hero when he or she has trouble talking or understanding words? Use your imagination!
4. What's a favorite treat that helps you when you're feeling down? Why do you think this is your favorite?
5. How can you help your head trauma heroes get their "happy" back?





CHAPTER 5

One of Head Trauma Hero's most difficult feats was the slow process of learning to talk again. That big crash had jumbled up all the words in her head, and she was still having problems making sense of letters and relearning how to pronounce words.

Sometimes she would get it right. When she could point at the chair and declare, "Chair!" she felt like a real superhero. Other times, well, she felt like she was battling some supervillain's brain-scrambling laser beam. The word in her head often was *not* the word that came out of her mouth. And all her super strength was needed to speak even one small sentence. Some words were like kryptonite for her new brain—they drained all her power and sent her crashing back into bed to rest.

Speech therapy was as intense for Head Trauma Hero as training for a battle. She had to work hard and use all the brain power she had.

Part of Patti's transformation into Head Trauma Hero meant that she only had room in her brain for what was happening *right now*. In a lot of ways, this was a really cool superpower. If she was listening to a great song, her brain was filled with the music and nothing else. When a bite of her favorite ice cream hit her tongue, all she thought was *Yum!*

On the other hand, this super-focus could sometimes be a little, well, embarrassing. When combined with her word-scrambled brain, this new superpower could cause her to say the wrong thing at the wrong time. Then

she'd get a case of the "wonder words"—as in, "I wonder what word will come out of my mouth this time?!"

One day Head Trauma Hero was taking a ride in her wheeled bed to get a CT scan—a picture of her brain that would help the doctors see how her brain was healing. Her mom was walking beside her bed on the way to the scanning room.

The nurse maneuvered the bed into the elevator and pushed the large button that would take them downstairs. Everything was silent when Head Trauma Hero blurted out, "Boody cush."

Head Trauma Hero's mom looked at her with raised eyebrows. Mom wasn't sure what her daughter was trying to say, but she hoped she wasn't talking about the backside of the nurse standing in front of her!

Head Trauma Hero's face turned a bright shade of pink. She'd been focused on the large elevator button, watching the nurse push it, when—BOOM—the words had come out. And *not* the words she'd meant to say!

Then to her relief, the nurse smiled and laughed. "Don't worry about it! After all"—the nurse gave her a wink—"you aren't wrong. I could stand to have a little less pie."

Head Trauma Hero was still *really* embarrassed. But then her mom looked down at her with a little grin on her face and giggled. Our Hero wasn't able to laugh out loud yet, but she managed a crooked smile of relief. By the time the elevator doors opened, all three of them were grinning over their shared joke. Head Trauma Hero realized that laughter was a pretty great way to deal with the challenges of word-scramble brain!



- Head trauma heroes sometimes must battle with “word-scramble brain”—remembering the right words and making the right sounds can be tough.
- Learning how to unscramble those words takes a lot of energy, so head trauma heroes may need some extra rest.
- Laugh at yourself sometimes and invite others to laugh with you. Laughter is great medicine!
- Head trauma heroes may need a little bit longer to think before they speak, so be patient! Don’t try to say things for them—they will appreciate the chance to speak for themselves.
- Sometimes all head trauma heroes really need is quiet so their brains can heal.

1. Have you ever said something embarrassing without meaning to? What happened, and how did you react?
2. How could you help your friend say what they mean to say, without talking for them?
3. Think of ways you can give your head trauma hero some small hints so they can find the word for themselves.





CHAPTER 6

THE TREAT TOSS TRIAL

So many long, long weeks had passed since the big crash and the start of Head Trauma Hero's new adventure. But now, finally, she was home! While it felt so great to be back in her own bed and in her own room, our Hero was still trying to get used to her "new normal." She had so many mixed-up feelings.

Today, Patti was feeling pretty good. Her brain seemed a little less foggy. Her body didn't feel quite so tired and floppy. She decided she wanted to do something fun. She'd surprise her family with a treat!

She made her way slowly and quietly to the kitchen, where she found a bright-yellow bag of her favorite goodies, Rainbow Peanut Fan Tabs! These little candies were one of the first treats she'd tried when she was able to eat normally again, and that made her happy. The treats had become super special to her, like a little gift straight from God. In fact she'd started calling them "God's Holy Manna Treats"—small and sweet and straight from heaven, just like the Bible story.

Carefully, Head Trauma Hero filled four small dishes with candy and placed them on one of her mom's fancy serving trays. Then she picked up the tray and began to make her way to the living room, where her parents and older brother, Scott, were watching TV.

BAM! Head Trauma Hero's legs flew out from under her, and she landed hard on the kitchen floor. For an instant the air was filled with colorful candies as her nifty tray of scrumptious God's Holy Manna Treats flew into the air!

"Patti! Are you okay!?" her dad yelled.

Silence.

“Are you okay? Say something!” Scott was at her side, concern in his eyes.

“I don’t ... know ... what ... happened,” Head Trauma Hero said slowly, through tears.

“It’s okay, sweetheart. Let me help you.” Her mother took her by the hand and carefully helped her sit up.

After a few seconds of no words, Scott broke the silence. “That’s quite the superpower, Sis. You made it rain candy!”

Her parents, kneeling beside Head Trauma Hero, giggled at her brother’s joke.

She managed a tiny smile and wiped her tears with the back of her hand. “I wanted to surprise you. I guess I did!”

After a gentle group hug, the whole family got to work chasing down rolling candies. As Head Trauma Hero looked at her parents and brother, those mixed-up feelings swirled again: disappointment at her ruined plan, a little fear about her sudden fall, but also, so much love for her family who took such good care of her through it all.

After cleaning up, Scott helped his sister refill the dishes and carry the tray into the living room, where she handed each person their treat.

“Thank you, sweet girl.” Her dad beamed. “We know this is tough. But you are sooo brave. And we are always here to help you. Be patient with yourself.”

Patti nodded. *Being a head trauma hero is quite the adventure*, she thought as she smiled at her family. *Good thing I’ve got an awesome team on my side.*



- Getting back to “normal” will take time for head trauma heroes. Be patient with them and remind them to be patient with themselves as well.
- Head trauma heroes should take their time with tasks that are still difficult for them. Careful practice will help their brains relearn and heal.
- Making mistakes is okay. There will always be people who love you to help when you need them.

1. What are some things to remember when doing things that are difficult for you?
2. What are some ways you can help watch out for your head trauma heroes while still allowing them to do things for themselves?
3. When your head trauma heroes are having a hard time and need to cry or just be quiet, how might you support them, while allowing them the space they need?





CHAPTER 7

A HERO'S HOLIDAY

A big, beautiful, sparkly Christmas tree now shone in the corner of the living room. The stockings were hung by the chimney with care, just like the poem. The holidays were here—the first Christmas since Patti had become a head trauma hero.

She was feeling kind of down and wasn't sure why.

So many of her friends and family members were here together. The house was full of laughter and good smells and little cousins running through the halls. Christmas had always been her favorite time of year. Why was she feeling anxious and kind of, well, depressed? It was bumming her out, big time.

After sitting in a corner of the room alone for a while, Head Trauma Hero rose to her feet and trudged through the crowded house until she found her mom alone in the pantry, looking for ingredients for the pie she was about to make. "Mom?"

"Yes, dear?" Mom answered distractedly, still scanning the shelves for pie fixings.

"Why do I feel so weird today?"

Her mom turned toward her, worry in her eyes. "Are you not feeling well?" She placed a cool hand on her forehead. "Are you feverish?"

"No." Patti shook her head. "It's not that kind of weird. It's hard to explain. I just feel so sad. Like I'm missing someone. But I don't know who and I don't know why."

Her mom smiled a bit sadly and took her daughter's face in her hands. "It's okay, baby girl. Everything has changed so fast for you. And the holidays are filled with so much excitement and activity. Your emotions aren't quite sure how to handle it. Maybe part of what you are missing is the Patti you used to be. It's hard to suddenly be different ... and it's okay to be sad about that. Being a head trauma hero is going to take some getting used to. But you know what, my brave girl? You can do it. You'll discover your new rhythm. I'm sure of it. You are, after all, a hero."

Head Trauma Hero glanced away from her mom and stared out of the window at the gently falling snow. Her mom stroked her long blond hair and kissed her gently on the forehead, "Be easy on yourself, Patti. It's going to be okay."

After a few seconds of silence, Mom gave a wink and held up a big jar of rainbow sprinkles. "How about we skip the pie and make some cookies ... with *extra* sprinkles!"

Patti smiled. "That's one thing that hasn't changed ... I am still cray-cray for sprinkles. They bring out the happy in me!"





- Special days, like holidays, can be a hard time for head trauma heroes.
- If you feel sad, anxious, or even confused, it is okay. This is normal.
- Be gentle with yourself and your emotions. You're learning how to be a head trauma hero, and that takes time.
- Talk to a trusted adult when you are feeling down.
- If your head trauma hero is sad, even during a usually happy time, like the holidays, encourage them that you are always there to listen and to support them.

1. Have you ever felt sad or “blue” during a normally happy time, like Christmas or your birthday?
2. Was there something that made you feel better? Why do you think this helped you?
3. What specific things could you do to be there for your head trauma hero when a special day makes them feel down instead of happy?





CHAPTER 8

MISSION IN THE MORNING

Bzzzz!! Bzzzzz!!

Head Trauma Hero's eyes flew open. That alarm clock was *loud*! 6:30 a.m. Our Hero had to “rise-n-shine” much earlier than usual this summer morning. (She wasn't sure how “shiny” she would be, but she *was* rising.)

Leigh Anne's family was on vacation this week and Patti had agreed to care for their chickens while they were gone.

Patti was excited and a bit nervous—she had never been responsible for farm animals before. And while she was still getting used to being a head trauma hero, many things were getting easier. She had more energy. Her brain was working better. And so in a brand-new step of faith, she had bravely inched out of her comfort zone and said yes to mission Chicken Care.

It wasn't going to be easy. Getting up early was kind of tough on her sleepy brain. She still forgot important things sometimes. But a new confidence was growing inside her as she recovered, along with a special sense that God was with her. If He had helped her through all the tough stuff that came with becoming a head trauma hero, He could definitely help her with a few clucky birds! So as she dressed, she kept reminding herself, “God will help me. Just trust Him.”

Patti arrived at Leigh Anne's house a little before seven, even before the sun was up. This was harder to do in the dark than she had expected. As she struggled with the henhouse latch in the dim light, her heart raced. She really wanted to do this without help. As she stepped backward to get a better look at

the latch, her left foot went *splat*! She'd put her boot smack dab into the middle of a fresh pile of number two from a very *relieved* hen. It smelled awful!

For a moment, Patti was tempted to give in to her frustration, give up, and go home. But then she took a deep breath (regretting that a little when she caught another whiff of chicken poo), said a quick prayer, and set to work on that latch again. When the door finally swung open, she giggled with relief and scraped her boot on the ground to clean it off. She greeted the clucking birds with a cheery "Good morning, ladies!"

The sun began to light up the sky as she spread handfuls of grain around the yard for the happily pecking hens. Our Hero's heart gave a little leap of happiness and pride. She had done something new. She was a head trauma hero ... able to open chicken coops in the dark and save chickens from hunger and thirst!

She giggled and sent up a little prayer. "Thanks for your help, God. I knew You'd be with me. Mission accomplished!"



- Head trauma heroes can learn to do new things!
- Trusting your head trauma hero to help you gives them confidence and can even help their brains heal!
- Everyone grows and learns when they step out of their comfort zones and try new things.
- Helping others and taking on new responsibilities can be a fun adventure!

1. What are a few new things you'd like to try? Who can you ask to help you get started?
2. How can you help your head trauma hero do new things? Even small things can be a big help!
3. What tasks could you ask your head trauma hero to help you with? (Oh, and remember to thank them for helping you!)





CHAPTER 9

MEMORY MALFUNCTION

“Flight 2234 will now begin boarding at Gate 7.”

Head Trauma Hero’s heart skipped a little. “We’re about to go!” She and her family were headed out on their first vacation since the crash. She felt like a thousand butterflies were having a huge party in her tummy. She was so excited to see new places and have fun with her family, but she was also more than a little nervous about how her brain would handle the adventure.

Patti tried to push away the nerves and focus on gathering her stuff. She sealed up her bright-yellow bag of Rainbow Peanut Fan Tabs so they wouldn’t spill everywhere and tucked them safely inside her backpack. Check. She grabbed her sweatshirt and tied it around her waist. Check. Then she turned back to her seat to grab her tablet. She’d been playing some games while she waited.

But when she looked, her heart fell into her stomach. The seat was empty. No tablet! She checked under the seat. Nothing. It was nowhere to be found!

Oh no, Head Trauma Hero thought. *My tablet! My new tablet! I don’t know where I put it!* Panic turned the tummy butterflies into squirrels. Her brain started to get fuzzy. Our Hero was frozen in place, unable to decide what to do next.

“C’mon, Sis!” her brother, Scott, said in an urgent voice. “Get in line! We’re about to get on the plane.”

Scott’s irritation turned to worry when he saw his sister’s pale face. He grabbed their parents, and they all stepped out of line and rushed to her side.

Mom knelt so she was face to face with her daughter. “Take a deep breath, honey. Tell me what you need.”

“My tablet,” Patti managed to squeak. “Lost.” Sometimes, when she got really anxious, our Hero’s word-scramble brain came back to haunt her. This was definitely one of those times.

“We’ll find it, kiddo. Never fear!” Dad swooped into action, scanning the seats nearby while Scott did the same.

“Are you sure it isn’t in your backpack, sweetie?” Mom asked gently. “Close your eyes and try to remember when you last saw it.”

Focusing on her mom’s calming voice and gentle touch, Patti started to relax. The squirrels stopped their stomach scramble. And the image of her tablet nestled in her backpack side pocket came to her mind. She dug into her bag and checked. Sure enough, there it was. Safe and sound.

“I found it!” Head Trauma Hero called to her dad and brother. “Sorry. It was here all along!” She felt kind of embarrassed.

“No worries. Glad it’s safe and sound! Let’s get this show on the road. To the plane!” Dad teased.

As they made their way back to the line, Mom held up her hand. “High five! You solved the case of the missing tablet!”

Head Trauma Hero grinned. She *had* solved the case! And now she was ready for her next adventure ... vacation!



- Head trauma heroes can sometimes have trouble remembering where they put things.
 - Putting things away in the same place every time can help.
 - Don't be afraid to ask for help if you have lost something.
 - Head trauma heroes may need a little extra help keeping track of things. Being patient and helping them stay calm when something is missing is important.
-
1. What are some important things that you need to make sure you have when you head to school or on a trip? Put these items on a list and then make a plan for where you will put them every time.
 2. What are some practical ways you can help your head trauma hero when they struggle with remembering things?
 3. Now, be creative! How can you help your head trauma hero remember important things without making them feel embarrassed?





CHAPTER 10

HEROES HELPING HEROES

“Dzien dobry!”

Startled and caught off guard, Head Trauma Hero turned quickly to see a boy her age strolling into their back yard.

“What did you say?” she blurted out. *Oh great, she thought, word-scramble brain strikes again! I didn’t understand a word he said!*

“Ah, my new friend, I just said to you, ‘Good day’ in Polish,” Irek kindly explained.

“Ohhhh,” Head Trauma Hero responded with a sigh of relief. It wasn’t a brain misfire ... It was a totally different language!

Irek noticed Head Trauma Hero’s look of confusion. “I did not mean to cause you trouble. I just wanted to say hi to my new friend.” He smiled at her shyly.

“Oh wow! That’s so cool, Irek!” She grinned. “I’m so glad you told me that! Can you teach me how to say it too?”

Irek helped Head Trauma Hero put plates out on the picnic table, and he carefully pronounced the Polish greeting. They laughed together as she repeated the words a bit awkwardly.

Head Trauma Hero watched Irek out the corner of her eye as they worked. His family had moved to the United States from Poland only a year ago. The two families had met through a special support group for families affected by head trauma. Irek’s big brother, Jacob, had been hurt badly in a wreck back in Poland—so badly that he had to live in a special hospital where he could get

constant nursing care. The best place they could find was in the US, so the whole family moved across the ocean. Today they were getting together for a backyard barbeque to celebrate the beginning of summer.

Tears came quickly to Irek's eyes whenever he thought about his big brother. Irek had always looked up to Jacob and had always tried to be just like him.

As they finished setting the table, Head Trauma Hero could sense that Irek was sad. She gently touched his shoulder, and he turned his brown eyes to hers. "You thinking about your brother?"

"Yes." Irek looked away. "I miss him. I mean, he is still here. And yet he isn't."

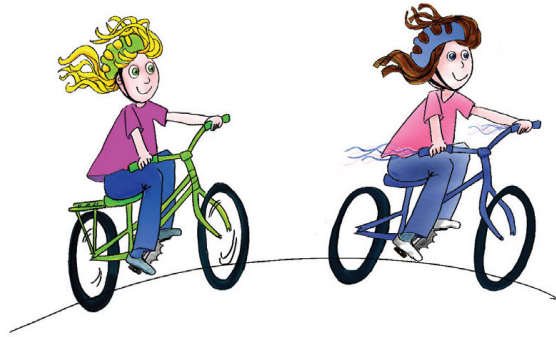
Head Trauma Hero nodded but didn't say anything. She remembered how her friends had sat quietly with her when she was in the hospital and feeling so very sad. She would now do the same for her new friend.

After a few moments, Irek wiped a stray tear off his cheek and smiled. "Thank you. You always know what to say even when sometimes that is not saying anything."

"Anybody want some food?" Head Trauma Hero's dad called from the grill. It was picnic time!

As the two families gathered around the table under a clear blue summer sky, our Hero's heart turned to God.

"Thank You, God, for always being with me in this new adventure. Your love and care have been so *huge* to me! Help me to use my new brain powers for good. May I truly be a head trauma hero for You, moment by moment, every single day!"



- Your experience as a head trauma hero gives you the special power to help other head trauma heroes!
 - New friendships can lead to new adventures.
 - Head trauma heroes and their families can give each other support on their journey together.
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1. When we go through difficult things, it is sometimes hard to believe that any good will come out of those tough times. Take some time to look back on a hard time you've had. What great adventures and good lessons did you receive along the way?
 2. Think about things your friends and family have done for you that really meant a lot or that helped you the most. How can you give that same support to others? Be creative; think outside of the box!
 3. What special superpowers do *you* have as a head trauma hero, or that you *see* in your head trauma hero friend? Celebrate them! Have a festive party and talk about all the amazing ways your Hero is one of a kind!

HEAD TRAUMA HERO TIPS AND TOOLS: BRAIN AIDS FOR THE ADVENTURE

Hope After Brain Injury

www.HopeAfterBrainInjury.org

A nonprofit, faith-based organization devoted to educating, equipping, and encouraging anyone affected by brain injury. Together, survivors of brain injury, caregivers/families, and the medical community advance hope and spread awareness of brain injury.

The Children's Hemiplegia and Stroke Association

www.CHASA.org

The Children's Hemiplegia and Stroke Association, CHASA, is a nonprofit organization founded by parents of children with hemiplegia in 1996 to provide information and support to families of children who have hemiplegia, hemiparesis, or hemiplegic cerebral palsy. CHASA provides informational websites and online discussion groups, plans and hosts events for children and their families, assists researchers in recruiting participants for research studies, provides financial assistance to help families in need purchase hand and foot braces, and provides college and vocational school and athletic scholarships for young adults who have hemiplegia.

Team Luke: Hope for Minds

www.TeamLukeHopeForMinds.org

Team Luke's mission is to enrich the lives of children with a brain injury and give hope to their families through support and education.

iHOPE

<https://www.yai.org/locations/schools/ihope>

The International Academy of Hope is a highly specialized brain injury school in New York City funded by the Sarah Jane Brain Foundation (SJBF). The mission of SJBF is to change the world for children, youth, and young adults who suffer from brain injury and other brain-based disorders by improving services, training, and research in this country and beyond.

United HealthCare Children's Foundation-Family Grants

<https://www.uhccf.org/>

UHCCF grants provide financial help/assistance for families with children who have medical needs not covered or not fully covered by their commercial health insurance plan.

Wheelchairs 4 Kids

<https://www.wheelchairs4kids.org/>

Wheelchairs, home and vehicle modifications, and devices for children with limited mobility.

Holton's Heroes

<https://www.holtonsheroes.org/>

Provides support, information, and rehabilitative devices for children and their families affected by a post-birth brain injury. Serves the community at large by connecting children who have suffered a life-threatening, post-birth brain injury with therapeutic tools and devices, enriching activities, educational information and resources for them and their loved ones.

BOOKS

AMANDA'S FALL: A Story for Children About Traumatic Brain Injury

By Amanda's mom, Kelly Bouldin Darmofal

Published by Loving Healing Press

ISBN 978-1615994502

The Short Story of One Tough Cookie

By Isabella Sementilli

Published by The Troy Book Makers

ISBN 978-1614684671

*Head Trauma Hero Patti would love to hear from her fellow superheroes about their adventures! You can reach her anytime at **PattiFoster.com** or **Patti@PattiFoster.com**.*



Breaks and bruises and brain injury are well-known to Patti Foster! In 2002, Patti and some friends were in a red Tahoe when a tractor-trailer full of cars smashed into them at high speed. Patti's faith, family, and friends helped her not give up. Now, Patti travels around the world giving heroic hope to head trauma heroes and their families.

#MakeADifferenceNow!